

MINUTES
MAYOR'S BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE
April 5, 2016
Aging & Disability Resource Center, 300 Adams Street
4:00 PM

Members Present: Paul Hartman, Alderman David Nennig, Lynn Austin, Jim O'Rourke, Muriel Austin, Mike Spencer

Chairman Paul Hartman called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

The meeting opened with discussion about when the City thins their plantings and takes the unwanted plants to the Yard Waste Center. Members asked what time of year the plants are cleared out. Dave Nennig said he will inquire. The plants are probably thinned in the fall, while perennials are divided in spring.

Lynn Austin told the Committee that the LaBaye website has received funding for their work in 2016 through the 1923 Fund, an environmental grant gifted by the Cofrin Family. This will allow for the purchase of extra material, including a complete set of the Jesuit Relations. The Jesuits documented our earliest written accounts of the land, the people, and the natural history at La Baye. She said that Wise Women Gathering Place suggested the LaBaye Project consider taking steps to become a 501c3 and that Wise Women's board voted to help the LaBaye Project accomplish this; however, Lynn said it may be premature to pursue that course at that time, unless they acquire funding for the Indian and Métis Museum. The LaBaye Project's three original goals were to create an informative website containing scans of primary source historic documents, establish a national Indian and Métis museum, and initiate an educational cultural festival. She mentioned that the City's funding from last year was used to organize portions of the site and make the material more user-friendly, and include a contact button on the website for user correspondence, and post the remaining scanned materials from the year's work. With the Cofrin funding this year, she intends to begin work on the "Timeline of History" section.

Lynn Austin said she will bring printouts of some newspaper articles which mention the historic Maple Street building as the former Fort Howard surgeon's quarters and include descriptions of its remodeling. The articles contain the testimony of a woman who lived in the building as a child when it was still standing on the original fort site. Lynn said she would considering asking a donor if they would be willing to help purchase and move the Maple St. building back to its original location on the fort site, if the City of Green Bay can provide that portion of the land.

Jim O'Rourke said that moving the building would be expensive and might not be worth the labor. He suggested that focusing on the Métis stories would be a more worthwhile effort.

Lynn Austin said that a building will be necessary for the proposed Indian and Métis museum and to house the growing archive, and the building will have to be situated in an appropriate location that holds a historical significance for the Indian communities that the museum represents. She said that the effort or lack of effort put forth by our community will send a

message as to whether or not we value our early history. She also noted that this would improve the community image.

Dave Nennig mentioned Cornell University's private collections as an example of an archive of records, and said that it would be valuable to be able to draw information from other archives as well. Lynn said she's had experienced some difficulty working with the local university archives and government organizations due to pre-existing politics and power dynamics.

Jim O'Rourke told the Committee that invasive species abatement is progressing along the Fox River Trail, through the efforts of the Village of Allouez and Stantec volunteers. The work originally started in the region of the Porlier Street pier on the Fox River, and continued along Baird Creek, led by Paul Hartman. Now the movement is focusing on new areas. The work has continued for four years so far, supported by the Friends of the Fox River Trail and the WI Heritage Parkway. Currently a two-acre scrub cleaning is being undertaken to support the trails, with professionals designing fish and bird habitats. The intent is to connect with the Fox River and East River Trails. Street-end parks are to eventually be adopted by local neighborhoods and people. These are the smallest parks, connected to each other by greenways. Mini-parks are nodes off the greenways, occupying less than a quarter-acre.

Dave Nennig brought up the trail being constructed along University Ave, which has been in development since 2011. He said the City has money to do it, and this year the trail will reach from Humboldt Road to Curry Lane. A new craft brewery will be situated along the trail between University Ave and St. Anthony Drive. The brewery has bought the building but is not open for business yet. As for the East River Trail, the City has been acquiring property through grants, and the demolition is not quite done. Local businesses are giving positive feedback. Lynn Austin said the cleared, open bank along the river looks very nice.

Regarding elections, Dave said that Green Bay doesn't stay open as long as the state allows clerk's offices to remain open. Our clerk's office is only open until 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, for early votings. Lynn Austin observed that some people tend to express doubt regarding the trustworthiness of electronic voting machines and prefer write-ins or voting at the clerk's office.

Paul Hartman and Jim O'Rourke attended the Baird Creek Association dinner. The speaker addressed the subject of birds and their habitats, including trees in urban environments and the types of trees that provide birds with food. The Extension Office publishes a list of trees that attract birds by providing a suitable environment with cover and food. John Jacobs coordinates a yearly survey of bird species, which was more difficult this year; on the weekend, volunteers watch an area for 2-3 hours and record the number of bird species spotted. Paul said that the Baird Creek Association is always looking for additional funding; however, campaigns become more difficult over time. He also expressed interest in a future project tapping 35-45 sugar maples on Baird Creek.

Lynn Austin brought up the City's new policy, which enables residents to have native yards. She was visited several times by JoAnne DeVetter, the Brown County chairman for the Bluebird

Restoration Association of Wisconsin, who later brought others with her to see the progress of Lynn's native yard project. They spoke positively about the city's effort toward supporting natural bird habitats.

Mike Spencer mentioned the Mayor's recent State of the City address, and inquired about the status of the Fort Howard land. Dave Nennig said there has been no specific land designated yet. The Mayor's State of the City address is available on the City's website.

Lynn Austin brought a copy of the 1951 publication "The Wisconsin Magazine" to show to the Committee. That particular issue was exclusively about the City of Green Bay. Looking through it, a discussion arose about the past theft (and eventual return) of the skull of a member of the Minahan family from a crypt in Woodlawn Cemetery. A story about Dr. John R. Minahan was also featured in Voyageur Magazine. Members mentioned other noteworthy individuals featured in the magazine. Mike Spencer said that the attorney Morgan Martin donated bells for the cathedral. Lynn Austin said that some years ago she purchased a book written by John Lawe, called "The Colonial History of Vincennes" (published in 1858), about that community when it was part of the Northwest Territory.

Jim O'Rourke suggested compiling two hundred stories for Brown County's two-hundred-year anniversary—for example, fifty stories about sports, fifty stories about businesses, fifty civic leaders. He participates in cemetery walks, which inform the public in a similar manner about movers and shakers such as the lumber barons. Lynn Austin suggested that these 200-year anniversary stories should be published to commemorate the occasion; however, she said there hasn't been much reliable research done lately, so it's important to get the facts straight. She's contacted the Chicago Northwestern Railroad to see about acquiring photos and maps showing more of our landmarks. Much of the shoreline of the Fox River is now filled-in wetlands, so those old maps are necessary to establish where the solid land was.

Lynn Austin suggested a community project to encourage inner-city families to have private garden boxes. This would be economical, and promote health and encourage a better diet. It would be a good project for young people to engage in. She pointed out that people used to have gardens but most do not anymore. Often kids don't know where food actually comes from or how it is grown or produced. She mentioned that a program aimed at helping Wisconsin EBT (formerly the food stamp program) recipients eat healthier was offering a matching \$10 in farmer's market fruits and vegetables for the first \$10 a recipient spent in EBT funds each market day. Members also mentioned the New Leaf Market Co-op (located near Shopko on the east side of DePere), which supports a winter farmer's market as well.

Jim O'Rourke said that the Mayor is giving names to various places within the city. He mentioned the discontinued railroad yard on Ashland Ave. That west-side area was originally a slough—including the Seymour Park region and the wide creek by the pickle factory. Members agreed that the railroad yard area would do very well if it was turned into a park.

Dave Nennig said the City conducted a storm-water study, and nine areas are problematic; the aforementioned slough was one of them. He said the City has been trying to market the

discontinued brown/greenfield on the side of the Mason Street bridge, but there's been problems due to railroad tracks, industry, and potential flooding. The City is considering building a baseball stadium on this area. Lynn Austin said people in her neighborhood would likely hate to see their neighborhood's baseball team leave the East side.

Paul Hartman spoke about the popularity of his neighborhood's new park; Jim O'Rourke spoke about other successful inner-city projects elsewhere, like Day Street.

Dave Nennig said that American Transmission Company has recently taken down 190 trees in the area of Skyline Boulevard, due to interference or potential interference with the WI Public Service power lines. American Transmission Co. has an easement that was previously granted by the City of Green Bay, and they have the right to remove any trees and vegetation which might interfere with their power lines. Negotiations between the City and American Transmission regarding this issue have been ongoing for six months. Dave said that the local residents are very unhappy with the removal of the trees. Jim O'Rourke mentioned that Arbor Day is coming up. Lynn Austin said that the City needs to start planning more for the future.

Dave Nennig also mentioned that the City took down around forty trees on Elm St. due to road reconstruction—mainly lindens and maples. The street will be replanted with young trees.

The meeting concluded at 5:45 PM. Next month's meeting is scheduled for May 3.

Respectfully submitted,

Muriel Austin